



## **FACT SHEET**

# **BLM-MONTANA/DAKOTAS**

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### **HiLine Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP)**

#### **FACT SHEET: Overview of the Planning Process**

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#### **What is a Resource Management Plan?**

A Resource Management Plan (RMP) and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) provide a landscape level framework for managing Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - administered lands and federal minerals. Currently, lands within the HiLine District are managed under two RMPs: the Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP and the West HiLine RMP.

#### **Where is the Planning Area?**

The HiLine RMP and associated EIS will guide management for approximately 2.4 million acres of BLM-managed surface and about 4.2 million acres of federal mineral estate within the planning area in Blaine, Chouteau, Glacier, Hill, Liberty, Phillips, Toole, and Valley Counties. These lands and minerals are managed by three BLM Field Offices in Havre, Malta, and Glasgow, along with the Great Falls Oil and Gas Field Office, which provides oil and gas program support in western, central, and northcentral Montana.

#### **Where We've Been . . .**

After many years of hard work by BLM staff, Cooperating Agencies, the Resource Advisory Council, and other engaged parties, the HiLine Draft RMP/EIS is ready for your review and comment. This Draft reflects a great deal of planning and analysis, as well as a significant investment of time from our cooperators and Resource Advisory Council members who participated in the process. Described below are some of the important milestones in the planning process that helped us get to this point.

#### **Scoping**

In October 2006, the BLM HiLine District initiated scoping for the HiLine RMP which included the BLM Malta, Havre and Glasgow Field Offices. A series of public scoping meetings were held across the planning area to obtain public input. The BLM reviewed comments and compiled a scoping report which was used in drafting this RMP. The scoping report and other documents can be found at: <http://www.blm.gov/8qkd>.

In 2010 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) determined that the Greater Sage-Grouse warranted protection under the Endangered Species Act, but that listing the species was precluded by the need to address other species first. One reason for the FWS determination was the need for "improved regulatory mechanisms" to ensure species conservation. The principal regulatory mechanisms for the BLM and the Forest Service are resource decisions in land management plans. The BLM and the U.S. Forest Service joined forces at the national level to develop coordinated long-term conservation measures and actions for the Greater Sage-Grouse in land management plans. This draft plan addresses a range of alternatives to address Greater Sage-Grouse conservation on BLM-administered surface and federal mineral estate within the planning area.

## Alternative Formulation

In the context of an RMP, alternatives are different management options the BLM may choose to manage lands in the planning area. One management option (alternative) emphasizes resource protection while another alternative option emphasizes resource production. The resource protection alternative would favor non-consumptive or non-degrading uses. The resource production alternative would favor consumptive uses, such as increased production of mineral resources.

The BLM reviewed public comments and met with cooperating agencies to determine how best to craft alternatives to address the issues, respond to the management opportunities, and to change resource conditions where appropriate. The completed alternatives were then analyzed for impacts and a preferred alternative was identified. The preferred alternative seeks to balance resource protection with resource production in consideration of the economic reliance of local communities on public lands and the way of life provided by public lands.

## Where We Are Now . . .

A notice of availability announcing the release of the Draft RMP/EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on March 22, 2013, initiating the 90-day public comment period. To be considered, comments must be marked received by June 20, 2013. To obtain a copy of the draft plan contact BLM's Havre Field Office at (406) 262-2820. The entire HiLine Draft RMP/EIS may also be accessed on the internet at <http://www.blm.gov/8qkd>.

Comments can be submitted by any of the following methods:

- Email: BLM\_MT\_HiLine\_RMP@blm.gov
- Fax: (406) 262-2856
- Mail: District Manager, BLM, 3990 Hwy 2 West, Havre, MT 59501
- Hand Deliver: Havre Field Office, 3990 Hwy 2 West, Havre, MT

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

## Where We Are Going Next . . .

The public comment period is a very important part of the planning process. The comments and information you provide will be considered in making changes to the draft plan. These changes will result in a proposed plan, which will be made available in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Components from any one of the alternatives analyzed in detail in the EIS may be used to develop the proposed plan. The proposed plan will be made available for review before an approved plan is issued with a record of decision. We will continue to provide updates on the status of our planning process through our website and newsletters. Thanks for your participation, and we encourage you to remain involved throughout the HiLine RMP planning process.



BLM lands in southeast Chouteau County. Photo by B. Hockett